

The New Amberola

ISSN 0028-4181

GRAPHIC



What's "wrong" with the Canadian Victor above? See p. 3.

36

SPRING, 1981

50¢

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Spring, 1981

The New Amberola Graphic

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Editor's Notes

It would seem that we received our second class mailing permit just in the nick of time! With the latest round of postage increases, the GRAPHIC would have been wiped out. You're well aware that first class postage went up by 20%, but did you know that the rate for 2 ounces of printed matter has increased by 75%? (This, ironically, under an administration which pledged to do something about inflation!) Without our second class permit, then, our postage bill would have risen to \$2.80 per subscription. That would have left us with \$1.20 to publish eight issues.

It was almost a personal loss when I learned of Ernest L. Stevens' death. He has been my favorite pianist since the age of ten, when I acquired my grandparents' Diamond Disc machine and his recording of "Hesitation Waltz." ("Three O'Clock in the Morning" was the record's big number, but I always preferred the reverse.) Ernie was by far no musical genius, but his seemingly effortless style of playing never fails to give pleasure -- and what more can be said of a musician?

A few years ago I met a retired dentist and his wife from Montclair, New Jersey. They told me that Ernie was a highly respected teacher in their town, and that many of the doctor's patients had become accomplished players after studying the Stevens method. They were surprised to learn that he had been a very active recording artist some sixty years earlier. Ernie will be missed by his several collector friends who enjoyed visiting with him at past programs at the Edison National Historic Site.

- M.F.B.

"Mention The Graphic—It identifies you"

Victor Variations in Canada

by Martin Bryan

I have been intrigued by the goings on of Victor's Canadian affiliate ever since discovering some records in their unique 216000 series. It will be recalled that this was a special series of 10" popular records, most of which were recorded in Montreal. They featured not only the leading Canadian artists of the day, but several American artists such as Billy Murray, Arthur Collins, Peerless Quartet, Billy Jones, Charles Hart, etc., as well. (For additional details, see the article in issue no. 13 of the GRAPHIC, as well as subsequent issues for the 216000 series discography.)

The 216000 series, however, was just one of several offered to Canadian record buyers. There were series of English imports, political addresses, French language recordings -- even various Red Seal series -- all available in Canada only. Readers who are interested in pursuing this fascinating aspect of "Victor-ana" are urged to obtain the late Ed Moogk's book, Roll Back the Years. It is available from the Canadian Government Publishing Center, Hull, Quebec, K1A 0S9; write them regarding current price.

This article, then, will not deal with any of these special Canadian series, but will concentrate on three variations of American issues as they appeared in Canada.

I. The Odd Couples

If you looked closely, you noticed that the catalogue number of the Canadian "My Man" differs from that on the American issue. This odd fact was first brought to my attention by Jerry Cook, a Brunswick, Maine collector, who noted that Canadian 18756 differed from American 18756! While the -A side on both was "Toddle" by the Benson Orchestra of Chicago, the -B side differed. At the time, we agreed that this must have been a pressing error in Canada which went undetected. However, subsequent discoveries revealed that this was not the case. Victor's Canadian affiliate in Montreal released a handful of couplings which, while they bore U.S. catalogue numbers, contained alternate couplings of titles. The practice was begun as early as 1921 by the Berliner Gram-o-phone Co. and continued until at least 1932 by its successor, the Victor Talking Machine Company of Canada, Ltd.

Sixty years after the fact, one can only speculate as to the exact reasons for these odd couplings. The recording activities of the Berliner Co. had probably reached such a level by 1921 that they felt they could no longer carry the entire Victor catalogue plus their own recordings. After all, the population of Canada was approximately only 10% that of the U.S. -- hardly a market for a greater output than that of the parent firm in Camden. At this point the Canadian affiliate evidently decided to "pick and choose" from the vast American list -- rejecting titles which a) would be poor sellers in Canada or b) were already available in their own 216000 series. Consequently, several 18000 series and up were never released in Canada. And in some rare instances they would pick one side from two different records and couple them for a Canadian release. Here's the way the two sides on Canadian 18756 originally appeared in the U.S.:

- 18756 - Toddle - The Benson Orch. of Chicago
Moonlight - Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra
- 18758 - Cherie - Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra
My Man (Mon Homme) - " " " "

The Canadian company already had their own versions of "Moonlight" (216280) and "Cherie" (216279) by Coleman's Orchestra, so paired the remaining two sides, using the catalogue of the former. Hence:

- 18756 - Toddle - The Benson Orch. of Chicago
(Can) My Man (Mon Homme) - Paul Whiteman Orch.

and the number 18758 didn't get used in Canada.

Over the dozen or so years that this practice was used, a fair number of odd couplings resulted -- though it should be noted that most U.S. numbers used in Canada were not tampered with. The following is a list of the odd couplings I'm aware of; there are undoubtedly many more, but I have access to only a couple of Canadian catalogues. This listing, then, will serve as a representation of the types of recouplings that appeared north of the border. In each case, the first title is the correct one while the second title came from a different U.S. record. The number in parentheses indicates the original U.S. issue number.

- 18756 Toddle - The Benson Orchestra of Chicago
My Man (Mon Homme) - Paul Whiteman Or. (18758)
- 18789 Sweetheart - Paul Whiteman Orchestra
Baltimore Buzz - Eubie Blake Orch. (18791)
- 18827 Blossom Time - Joseph C. Smith's Orchestra
Saturday - Arden and Ohman (18809)
- 18828 Say It with Music - John Steel
Nobody's Rose - William Robyn (18763)
- 19391 By the Waters of Minnetonka - Paul Whiteman Or.
Where the Rainbow Ends - Whiteman Or. (19353)
- 19676 Montmartre Rose - Jan Garber Orchestra
Seminola - Jan Garber Orchestra (19689)
- 19953 Too Many Parties and Too Many Pals - L. James
How I Love Her and She Loves Me Is Nobody's
Business - Gene Austin (19950)
- 20503 The Doll Dance - Nat Shilkret & Victor Orch.
When Day is Done - " " " " (20456)
- 20777 Dizzy Fingers - Zez Confrey and His Orchestra
Polly - Zez Confrey and His Orch. (21010)
- 21212 I Just Roll Along - All Star Orchestra
Away Down South in Heaven - The Virginians
(21228)
- 21514 I Can't Give You Anything But Love - Johnny
Hamp's Kentucky Serenaders
Dream House - Art Hickman Orch. (21392)

(over)

- 21943 I Get the Blues When It Rains - Nat Shilkret
and the Victor Orchestra
There is a Happy Land - " " " " (21913)
- 22108 Ain't Misbehavin' - Thomas Waller
I've Got a Feeling I'm Falling - " (22082)
- 22603 To Whom It May Concern - Bert Lown Orchestra
It Must Be True - Gus Arnheim Orch. (22561)
- 24224 Sittin' by the Fire with You - Glen Gray Orch.
My Darling - Don Bestor Orchestra (24142)

Next Instalment: Electrical Remakes

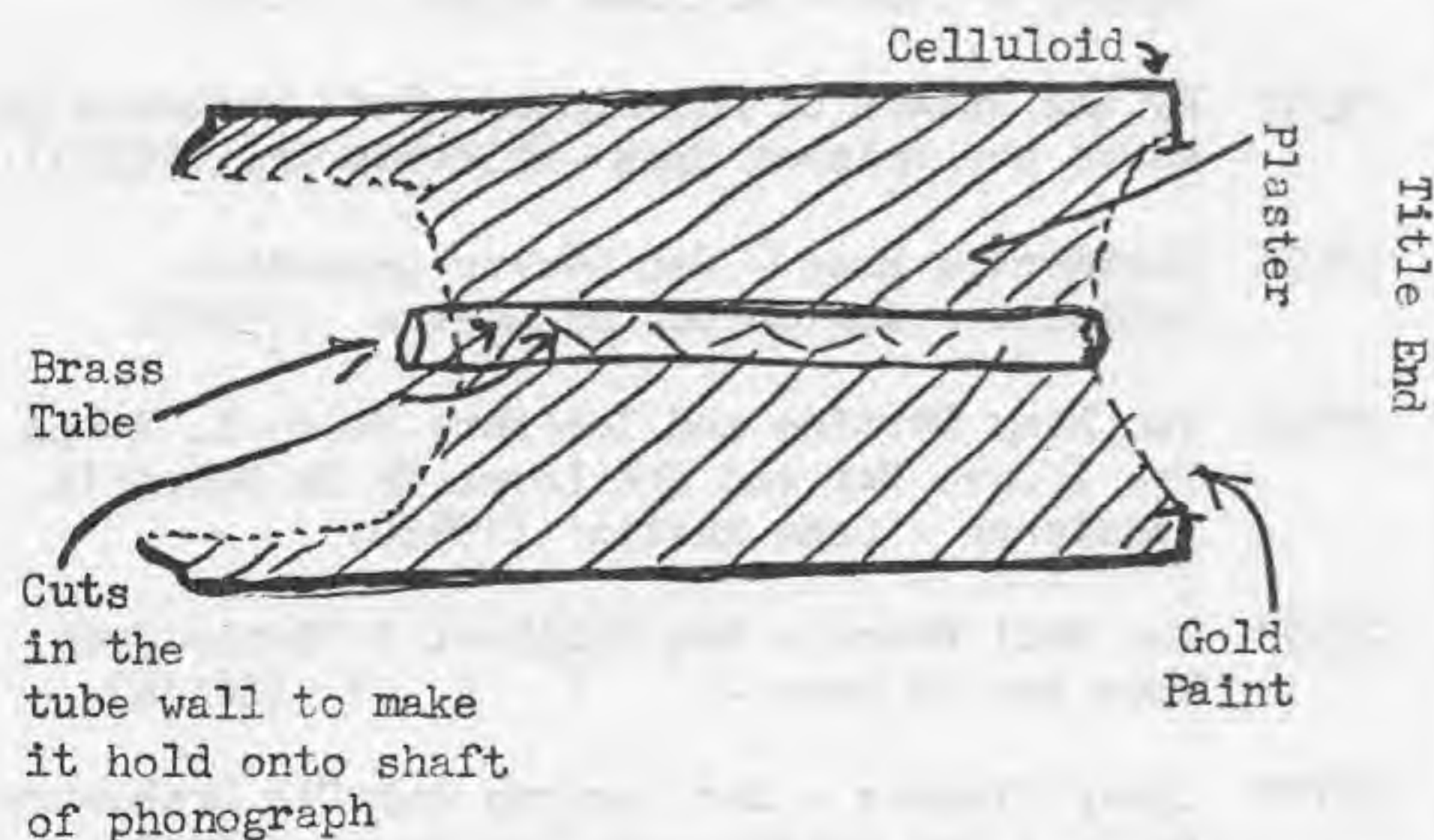
LAMBERT REVISITED

Since our listing of Lambert cylinders appeared in our issue no. 32, a much more complete list of these celluloid records was published in Antique Phonograph Monthly. Reader John Perschbacher sent us a list of variations of the records we listed which he has in his collection. As the APM listing was so much more detailed than ours, and since John sent the same listing to APM, we will leave it to that publication to act as clearing house for all Lambert data.

However, John mentioned having several Lamberts in his collection which are so unusual, we thought we'd pass along that portion of his letter.

Some Lamberts have what I would call a solid plaster core....The title end is convex and painted gold; the other end is recessed about an inch and has the title written in pencil in the plaster (along with the number). The title is so written because the gold painted end covers the title when stamped thereon. When the title is a raised one there is, of course, no writing on the plaster. A brass pipe is cast into the center of the core. These records were so made, on

Cutaway Side View



order from Cyrus Shigley, for his first model 24 cylinder coin operated 'multiphone'. I have original photos of his machine in their different stages of development which I obtained from his daughter. The numbers and titles of the Lamberts on the machine in one of these photos is clear indeed. The cylinders I have came from a fellow who had two of these first model machines. Incidentally, there were two Edison Bell

celluloid cylinders very much like Lamberts in with these which also had the plaster and tube cores.

Club & Society News

The Michigan Antique Phonograph Society has a full calendar of events scheduled for its members. Of special interest are a picnic in June at Grand Ledge, a meeting tentatively scheduled for Greenfield Village, and their "Phonovention-81" which will be held in Owosso. Record and phonograph enthusiasts who would like further information about this active mid-western organization should contact John Whitacre, 2609 Devonshire, Lansing, Michigan 48910.

Steve Barr, Toronto, is willing to act as co-ordinator in his area for collectors who would be interested in forming a new group. He would like to hear from anyone who would like to get together informally for the purpose of trading information, records, etc. He stresses that the organization would be open to all types of collectors - not just those specializing in jazz, opera, and so forth. Interested parties should contact him at 211 Pape Ave., Toronto, Ontario M4M 2W2 or call (416) 466-1726. Steve says "I'm always glad to get letters or calls from people who are interested in records and collecting same."

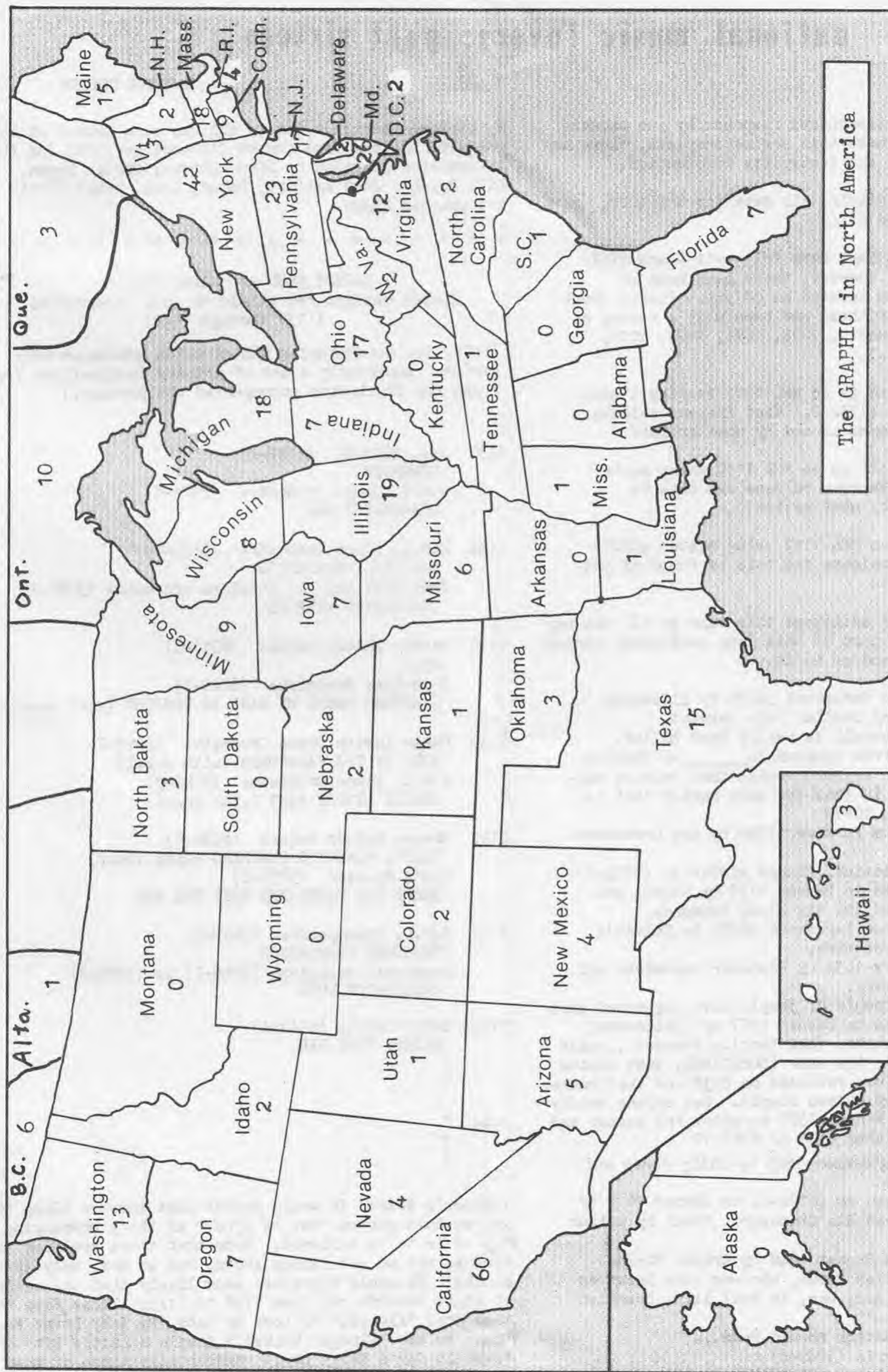
He also wishes to inform readers of the Antique Phonograph Society, which contains several record collectors as well as phonograph enthusiasts. Anyone wishing more information can contact their secretary, Don Woodrow, 21 Minos Crescent, Scarborough, Ontario M1G 3P8.

Have you ever wondered if there were other collectors in your area? We thought it would be interesting to publish a map showing all the places where the GRAPHIC goes, and how many subscribers receive it in each state and province. At present writing, we have 435 subscribers. Each subscriber (except my parents!) has an avid interest in recordings and/or phonographs, and might therefore be interested in getting together with other collectors in the area. While it is against our policy to send out lists of subscribers' names and addresses, we will publish your name if you're willing to act as co-ordinator in your area for getting a group together (as with Steve Barr). Drop us a note and we'll be happy to include pertinent details in a future column of "Club & Society News."

Items from New Amberola:

1897 Columbia Record catalogue (reprint).....75¢
Oxford & Silvertone Records: 1911-1918 (book) 2.75
Edison Diamond Disc labels (blank).....40/1.00
Graphophone Poster, 15" x 7" (reprint).....60¢
Emerson Record catalogue, 1917 (reprint).....90¢
Cab Calloway biography (book).....3.00
Record Collector's Pocket Index (3½" x 6" loose-leaf bookkeeping system).....3.00

All items sent postpaid.



The GRAPHIC in North America

Puerto Rico	1	Sweden	1	England	2
Australia	2	Finland	1	Belgium	1
		Denmark	1		

national music lovers: part sixteen

by DAVE COTTER

While we've had a tremendous response by you readers who are intent to make this series complete, there are still blank spaces and incomplete information.

1. We are still missing all data for NML 1088, 1121, 1143 and 1144.
2. The following NMLs have full artist and title information...however, there have been no master numbers located as of yet. Please check your copies of these and hopefully a master or two may be found... 1073, 1074, 1075, 1076, 1079 and 1104.
3. MOLLY BRANNIGAN is on NML 1083 bearing a master number of 41752-2. What Emerson release can this be found on and by what artist?
4. SLEEP BABY SLEEP is on NML 1110 using master 42001. What Emerson release can this be found on and by what artist?
5. HILO HULA is on NML 1112 using master 42007. What Emerson release can this be found on and by what artist?

Our corrections and additions this time go all the way back to the second part of this long continuing series. Grab your pencils and go to it.

- 1010-A (723) from Paramount 33076 by Elizabeth Spencer and Stellar Male Quartet.
- 1012-B Francis Burrell is really Reed Miller.
- 1016-B (4515-3) from Symphonola by Shannon Four. Can anyone provide that release number...and is this the same master that is on Emerson 1087?
- 1034-B (1440) from Puritan 11269 by the Orchestra de Luxe.
- 1039-B third variation. Change master to (5034-1). This traces to Banner 1159 by Thomas and Bernard and the Six Black Diamonds.
- 1101-B (22001) from Paramount 20034 by Selvin's Novelty Orchestra.
- 1133-A from Banner 1654 by Fletcher Henderson and His Orchestra.
- 1133-B (6165) a couple of people have suggested that this traces to Banner 1587 by Continental Dance Orchestra (Max Terr)...However...while the tune is the same (SOMETIME), Rust claims that Max Terr recorded on 6135 and that master 6165 was by Nathan Glantz. Can anyone verify a copy of Banner 1587 to check the master and confirm either 6135 or 6165???
- 1129-B (6145) from Banner 1605 by Billy Jones and Ernest Hare.
- 1134-B Now confirmed as (6194-2) on Banner 1619 by Sam Lanin and His Orchestra, vocal by Arthur Fields.
- 1135-A (6237) from Banner 1648 by Arthur Fields.
- 1135-B (3736) Charles Brown, who was also known as Ben Litchfield, was, in real life, Franklyn Baur.
- 1136-B full information should read...
David Harris (3749-8)
WAIT TILL THE SUN SHINES AGAIN

My eternal thanks go out to all who have helped on this project and this time around I'm most grateful for the information provided by Steve Abrams, Martin Bryan, Bill Bryant, John Leifert, Robert Long, Louis Pyritz and Quentin Riggs.

* * * * *

LATEST SONG AND DANCE SERIES
(Label design: red shield on gold background)
(1137 through 1144)

(NOTE: See accompanying NML ad which announces this series. Apparently a set of printed instructions for doing the charleston accompanied the package.)

- 1137 Jos. Elliott (6138-2)
REMEMBER
N.M.L. Dance Orchestra (3721-1)
CHARLESTON MAD
- 1138 N.M.L. Dance Orchestra (3590-2)
NATIONAL CHARLESTON
Fred Hall and His Roseland Orchestra (3781-2)
CHARLESTON WITH ME
- 1139 Master Melody Makers (6311-5)
WHO?
Manhattan Musicians (6229-1)
I WONDER WHERE MY BABY IS TONIGHT (with vocal)
- 1140 Music Lovers Dance Orchestra (6298-7)
SONG OF THE VAGABONDS (with vocal)
N.M.L. Dance Orchestra (6383-3)
PRETTY LITTLE BABY (with vocal)
- 1141 Master Melody Makers (6336-2)
THAT'S NOBODY'S BUSINESS (with vocal)
Sam'l Spencer (3751-2)
WHERE THE MOUNTAINS MEET THE SEA
- 1142 N.M.L. Syncopators (3659-2)
BROADWAY CHARLESTON
Manhattan Musicians (3768-2) or (3763-2)
CHARLESTON LOVE
- 1143 David Harris (6347-4)
SLEEPY TIME GAL
?
?
- 1144 ?
?
?

(Editor's Note: It would appear that somehow along the way we have gotten "out of sync," if the accompanying NML ad is to be believed. Note that there are five titles in the ad not listed above, but we have only three blanks! It would therefore seem likely that the series of eight records ran from 1138 to 1145. Those five titles are: "Always," "I Love My Baby, My Baby Loves Me," "Down by the 'Winegar Woiks'," "Smile a Little Bit" and "Save It for a Rainy Day." Undoubtedly three of them would account for the above three blanks.)

---MATRIX NOTES---

- 1137 (6138) Plaza master by Franklyn Baur
 1137 (3721) from Grey Gull 1309, Cotton Blossom Orch.
 Song title on G. G. appears as TELL YOUR
 GIRL. Both records have been aurally com-
 pared and found to be identical.
 1138 (3590) by Nathan Glantz and His Orchestra. The
 NML release is the only one known (to
 date) of this master.
 1138 (3781) Obviously by Fred Hall. From Grey Gull
 1321 as I'M MUSIC MAD by Original Dixie
 Rag Pickers.
 1139 (6311) on Banner 1657 by Missouri Jazz Band (Ben
 Selvin)
 1139 (6229) from Banner 1617 by Sam Lanin and His Or-
 chestra; vocalist is Arthur Hall.
 1140 (6298) from Banner 1661 by Newport Society Or-
 chestra (Ben Selvin); vocal by Ernest Hare.
 1140 (6383) from Banner 1681 by Imperial Dance Orches-
 tra (Glantz); vocal by Irving Kaufman.
 1141 (6336) from Banner 1657 (as NOBODY'S BUSINESS) by
 Missouri Jazz Band (Ben Selvin); vocal by
 Arthur Fields.
 1141 (3751) from Grey Gull 2215 by Mr. "X"; sounds
 like Arthur Fields
 1142 (3659) appears on Grey Gull 1291 as YOU'RE MY
 BABY by Metropolitan Dance Players.
 1142 (3763 or 68) help!
 1143 (6347) on Banner _____ by Irving Kaufman
 1143 () ?
 1144 () ?
 1144 () ?

We still have a ways to go in this series and then at
 about 1220 or so, the label changes to New Phonic.
 Highest New Phonic known at the moment is 1248. For
 the next instalment, we're missing all data for NML
 1148, 1149 and 1151. Please check your collections and
 send any additions, corrections, comments or money to:
 Dave Cotter, 1111½ Mission St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

It's amazing...

how many subscribers forget to notify us of their
 address change! Instead, we receive the new ad-
 dress from their former post office (form 3579),
 a bill for 25¢, and the GRAPHIC gets tossed out.
 Magazines do not receive automatic forwarding un-
 less you pay extra. To avoid missing a single
 issue, and to save us a quarter, PLEASE be sure
 to let us know of any change in your address.

FREE! CHARLESTON DANCE INSTRUCTIONS



SIXTEEN LATEST CHARLESTONS Fox Trots and Songs

On Eight
Full Size
10-Inch
Double-Faced
Records

\$2.98
FOR
ALL

New Improved
Recordings

Here are the very latest Broadway Hits - including the
 newest Charlestons, Fox Trots and Songs - New Improved
 Recordings. SIXTEEN selections - 8 Double-Face full size
 10-INCH records - all for only \$2.98. BRAND NEW records
 - Not damaged! \$6.00 value. With each set we will include
 complete illustrated Charleston Dance Instructions pre-
 pared especially for us by Oscar Duryea, President of the
 American National Assn. Masters of Dancing.

Here They Are - All Big Hits

Always (Irving Ber- lin's latest hit)	National Charleston
Who (from "Sonny")	Pretty Little Baby
I Wonder Where My Baby is Tonight?	That's Nobody's Busi- ness
Song of the Vagabonds (from "The Vaga- bond King")	Smile a Little Bit
Charleston With Me	Broadway Charleston
I Love My Baby, My Baby Loves Me	Charleston Love
Down by the "Wine- gar Works"	Where the Mountains Meet the Sea
	Sleepy Time Gal
	Save it for a Rainy Day

SEND NO MONEY

Never before has there been such a money-saving bargain
 in latest HITS. How can it be done? By manufacturing in
 SETS ONLY and selling DIRECT TO PHONOGRAPH
 OWNERS. Each customer, therefore, saves the usual 50
 per cent. allowed to dealers and jobbers.

Let us send you this complete set of SIXTEEN selections
 for 10 days' trial. Just mail the coupon or a letter. When
 the package arrives, give the postman \$2.98 plus a few
 pennies for delivery charges, then TRY THE RECORDS.
 If you are not completely satisfied, SEND THE SET BACK,
 and every penny you have paid will be refunded AT ONCE.
 If you act promptly, complete illustrated instructions for
 dancing the Charleston will be included with your set free

National Music Lovers, Inc.
 327 W. 36th St., Dept. 674-K, New York City

NATIONAL MUSIC LOVERS, INC.
 Dept. 674-K, 327 W. 36th St., New York City
 Please send me for 10 days' trial your collection of 8 new "Na-
 tional" records containing 16 very latest Charleston songs, fox trots
 and waltzes. I will pay the postman \$2.98 plus delivery charges on
 arrival. I reserve the right to return them at any time within 10 days
 and you will refund my money. Also include FREE, complete in-
 structions for dancing the Charleston. (Outside U. S. \$3.75 cash
 with Order.)

Name
 Address
 City..... State.....

National Music Lovers ad from the April, 1926 issue of Strength Magazine

Neglected Edison Diamond Disc Artists

V: CAROLINA LAZZARI

by Robert B. Stone

Occasionally a singer of proven operatic potential decides, after a brief period of success in the Big Time, to pursue the less arduous career of wife (Emmy Bettendorf*), recitalist (Sembrich), teacher (Marchesi), or retiree on a substantial competence (Emma Eames).

One or more of these courses seem to have been preferred by the contralto Carolina Lazzari, a native of Milford, Mass., where she was born in 1891. After a period of study both in New York and Italy (under instructors whose names remain unknown to me), she made her formal opera debut in 1917 with the Chicago Opera which, despite the high esteem in which she was held by the critics, made curiously sparing use of her. A somewhat hyperbolic item from the New York Times in 1917 claimed that "In Chicago she won acclaim singing leading contralto roles." Actually, during that season she sang only two roles, both of secondary importance. During the 1918-19 season she did slightly better, being entrusted with three roles including La Cieca and Delilah.

Lazzari was one of the Edison recording artists chosen to participate in the widely publicized "tone tests" during 1917. A reviewer in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, reported how "Miss Lazzari would sing part of the selection and then, standing silent, would let the people judge how closely the machine reproduced, or rather, RECREATED, her voice. In each group of songs she increased her hold on the audience."

Although this writer pays scant attention to the claims of record catalogues on behalf of their artists, the following paragraph from the Edison Catalogue of 1922 deserves to be quoted, as it does the singer no more nor less than justice, and because of another interesting statement:

"Her voice is remarkably warm and luscious in quality, with a gorgeous opulence of tone." (This much is borne out by her recordings.) But the paragraph goes on to say that "one of her RE-CREATIONS (i.e., Diamond Discs) discloses the lowest note ever recorded by a female voice" (including, presumably, Columbia's "girl tenor," Ruby Helder). Edison coyly omits to mention which disc contains that formidably low note. In my experience, the lowest notes ever recorded by a contralto were the D's sung by Schumann-Heink and Anderson at the conclusion of Schubert's "Der Tod und das Mädchen." Can any of our readers supply the missing information?

Lazzari joined the Metropolitan forces for the season of 1920-21 and on December 26, according to Irving Kolodin, "sang a very agreeable Amneris." (Whether Verdi would have approved of an agreeable Amneris, however well sung, is a question; but let that pass.)

Her final operatic engagement, in 1921, was with the historic Colon Theatre in Buenos Aires. Thereafter she confined her activities to recital work and teaching until her death at Stony Creek, Conn., in 1946 at the age of 55.

* At the time, there was much speculation over the sudden disappearance of Bettendorf from the musical scene. I have it on the direct authority of Friedrich Schorr that she married and, in doing so, terminated her operatic career.

Lazzari's recording career was limited to a total of 22 Diamond Discs, made between 1917 and 1919. Girard & Barnes, as well as Wile's Edison Disc Recordings, can furnish the complete list; for connoisseurs, the following titles might be of special interest:

- 1918 STABAT MATER: Pac ut portem (82160)
- 1919 MADAMA BUTTERFLY: Tutti i fiori (with Marie Rappold) (82213)
- HUGUENOTS: Nobil Signori (82567)
- DINORAH: Si, caprina (82567)
- SAMSON ET DALILA: Amour, viens aider (83079)
- SAMSON ET DALILA: Mon coeur s'ouvre (83079)

Chicago Opera Roles

- 1917-18 Giglietta (Iodoletta), Trine (La Sauteriot)
- 1918-19 Giglietta, La Cieca, Delilah

Metropolitan Opera Roles

- 1920-21 Amneris

WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

Carolina Lazzari Scores in Tone-Test Triumphs

" * * * Miss Lazzari would sing part of the selection and then, standing silent would let the people judge how closely the machine reproduced, or rather, RE-CREATED her voice. In each group of songs she increased her hold on the audience. Her programme ended with 'Ben Bolt,' in the last stanza of which the lights were completely extinguished in the building. No one could tell whether the voice human or the voice mechanical was singing until the lights flashed up, when it was found that the artist had left the stage."—*Pennsylvania Grit, Williamsport, Pa. Review of Tone-Test Concert held at Williamsport, Pa., Oct. 6, 1917.*

" * * * Miss Lazzari sang in accompaniment with her own records. Except from the movement of Miss Lazzari's lips, it was not possible to tell when she had ceased singing and the phonograph had taken up the air."—*Williamsport, Pa., Gazette and Bulletin. Review of Tone-Test concert held at Williamsport, Pa., Oct. 6, 1917.*

" * * * Miss Lazzari demonstrated the marvelous mechanical perfection of the Edison machine for she literally sang a duet with herself * * * singing a counter-melody to her own solo, * * * the lights were extinguished, making it almost impossible to detect whether Miss Lazzari, or the Edison RE-CREATION of her voice was producing the melody."—*Lock Haven, Pa., Express. Review of Tone-Test concert held at Lock Haven, Pa., on Oct. 11, 1917.*

The above newspaper quotations, plus the accompanying pose of Miss Lazzari with the Edison Phonograph, are from the Edison booklet "What the Critics Say."



Carolina Lazzari, leading contralto of the Metropolitan Opera Company, is here shown proving the absolute realism of the New Edison by the test that only Edison makes—direct comparison between the living voice and the New Edison's RE-CREATION of it.

HERE & THERE

Reader Janice League writes to inquire about a rather strange record she and her husband acquired not long ago. It has your editor thoroughly stumped for an explanation; perhaps one of our readers would care to take a stab at it. As Janice describes it, "(It's) Columbia 15167-D, by Elzie Floyd and Leo Boswell, with 'The Two Orphans' listed as the selection on one side of the label, and 'Lonesome Valley' on the other. However, while cleaning it, we noticed 'VE' stamped in the wax, and Victor number 21226A stamped in the wax on one side, while Victor number 20606B appeared on the other. You can imagine our curiosity at this point! Upon playing it, we found side #20606 contained a classical piece, while #21226 was a rather jazzy novelty song. The record appears to be laminated and made of Columbia materials, but is thinner than usual due to the Victor matrices used. The edge has never been smoothed out, as is normally done. The Columbia labels were obviously professionally applied...What kind of a hybrid do you suppose this is? The only idea I have is that it was put together by Columbia as some sort of 'gag'."

I was able to tell Janice that the two Victor matrices used were a selection from the William Tell Overture and a number by the Duncan Sisters, but that's about all. The fact that the disc contains Victor masters and yet appears to be a Columbia pressing defies explanation. How (and why) would Columbia have acquired Victor masters? If this was some sort of sample pressing, it certainly wouldn't have contained misleading labels; and yet, why would they go to such an extent merely for a gag? I believe Columbia was doing all of their own pressing at this point (late 1920's), so it's not as if an independent record pressing plant somehow got into the act. How about it, readers?

Just as we were getting all the loose ends for this issue pulled together, we heard from Fred Smith who has another of those mysterious "RADIO" records, as mentioned in this column in the last issue. Fred's, however, is black on green and appears to have a different logo at the top than the one described in issue 35. He included the following sketch:



Details of the record are as follows:

- 444-A The Boat Song (Take a Ship for Yourself) (Ben Samberg) - Benny Bell - vocal - Frankie "Miggs" Rand and Band
- 444-B A Disgusted Millionaire - same info as above. copyright 1939

From the looks of the titles, RADIO just might have been intended for an esoteric market (i.e., a "party" record clientele)! Note that the microphone is rather old fashioned looking for 1939, as is the antenna back of the word "RADIO," if, indeed, that's what it's supposed to be. While Fred's version seems to be later than the example mentioned last time, he notes that the same New York address is given.

We would like to thank those readers who take the time to send us various items for use. It is, of course, this willingness to share that gives the GRAPHIC a broader base of interest and appeal.

The National Archives has recently produced a 50 minute tape cassette which spoken word collectors will find invaluable. It's entitled "Sounds of History: World War 2," and is a powerful audio history of the war as broadcast over the radio, from President Roosevelt's "fireside chat" after Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939 to the Japanese surrender in 1945. Side two, "Allied Turncoats Broadcast for the Axis Powers," features the propaganda messages of such wartime personalities as Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally. Readers who are interested in historic recordings of this nature are advised they may order the cassette for \$8.50 postpaid from: NEPS, National Archives, Washington, D.C. 20408.

(cont.)



For every one of our Edison T-Shirts or Totebags ordered between now and June 30, we will include a bonus of a mint 1947 Thomas A. Edison U. S. commemorative 3¢ postage stamp.



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Here and There (cont.)

Edison Blue Amberol Recordings, 1912-1914. In the review of this fine book in our last issue, we incorrectly gave the price as \$21.95 as of March 1st. Please note that this should have been \$22.95. We understand that the supply of this limited edition is rapidly being depleted, so be sure to order your copy now to avoid disappointment.

Ron Dethlefsen tells us that he is busy at work on Volume II of the above book, which will cover the years 1915-1929. The second book will feature six pages of color illustrations, will contain facsimiles of nearly every monthly supplement, some in color, and will include at least three dozen more record slips from the pre-1915 period. Among the "discoveries" to be featured will be the special Blue Amberols made of the Ford Motor Co. Band, as well as the illustration of a rare Amberola 30 Sheraton cabinet. Ron promises to keep us posted as the book develops.

N.A.G. Readers Take to the Airwaves

We already know of several readers who are involved in producing radio programs which feature vintage recordings. We will be happy to publicize any others if you will kindly draw our attention to them.

Don Chichester is doing a program aired over various public radio stations called "The Spirit of '78." The program is "dedicated to the old 78 rpm disc, combined with items of history and nostalgia about the times of the records played." The program originates from WQLN-FM, Erie, Pennsylvania.

Ray Smith's program, "The Jazz Decades," has been making the rounds of many public radio stations for several years, and continues to be very well researched and produced. Ray is full of surprises, and occasionally will vary his program with Vess Ossman ragtime or Phil Napoleon Diamond Discs.

We understand that the late Bob Stone's program, "The Master Singers," can still be heard in some parts of the Northeast. Last we knew, WAMC-FM (Albany, New York) was broadcasting the series. Readers who are interested in the careers of classical vocalists will find this series especially enjoyable.

Lou Dumont's series, "First Ladies of Radio," can also be heard on public radio stations. Recently aired were biographies of Ruth Etting and Vaughn de Leath. Lou illustrates his broadcasts with interviews, recordings, and rare airchecks.

Lou's other program, "78's and 33's," can be heard on Vermont Public Radio, and may also be on other public stations.

Our readers who live in the Baltimore area can hear programs from time to time over WBAL which are put together by Baltimore Vintage Record Club members. Their last effort which we heard about featured Kate Smith.

Steven Barr advises that he is still interested in hearing from any readers who can assist him with the pre-1910 period of his Dating Guide - especially with the lesser-known labels which appeared and disappeared during this decade. Readers who feel they can help with the project are asked to get in touch with him at 211 Pape Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4M 2W2.

OBITUARIES

Chicago Tribune, Tuesday, March 31, 1981

Edith Wilson, a singer, actress, and vaudeville performer for more than 60 years, died Monday in Michael Reese Hospital and Medical Center. She was 84.

Miss Wilson, of 5921 S. Indiana Av., entered the hospital March 2 after a fall on a stairway, according to her husband, Millard. She had been a periodic resident of Chicago since age 17.

In 1921 she became the third black woman in history to make a recording when she recorded on the Columbia label.

It wasn't until 1977 that she recorded her first album, "He May Be Your Man," a collection of songs from the 1920s and 1930s, along with two she wrote.

In her long career she was a blues, jazz, and show singer and a stage, radio, movie, and television actress. And for 18 years she was Aunt Jemima for the Quaker Oats Co.

One of her best-known radio roles was that of Kingfish's shrewish mother-in-law on "Amos 'n' Andy." She later portrayed Kingfish's girlfriend on the television series.

She sang with Duke Ellington in Cotton Club shows; toured England in 1934 with Bill "Bojangles" Robinson's "Memphis Bound" show; and sang with many big bands, including those of Cab Calloway, Benny Carter, Noble Sissle, Jimmy Lunceford, and Sam Wooding.

She gave a dramatic performance with Humphrey Bogart in "To Have and Have Not."

In the 1930s Miss Wilson, Fats Waller, and Louis Armstrong teamed to sing "My Man is Good for Nothing But Love," in an act known as "The Thousand Pounds of Harmony."

Miss Wilson was born Edith Woodall in 1896, but later trimmed 10 years from her age for show business purposes.

She started in vaudeville in a singing duet with a friend, Lena Wilson. She married Lena's brother, Danny Wilson, a pit pianist in a touring show in 1921, and they made their act a trio. He died in 1928, and she was married to her surviving husband, Millard, also named Wilson, in 1947.

Also surviving are two sisters, Grace Harrison and Madie Woodall.

(article furnished by Allen Goldhamer)

Newark Star Ledger, April 7, 1981

Ernest L. Stevens, 87, of Montclair (N.J.) died yesterday in Mountainside Hospital, Glen Ridge.

Mr. Stevens, who was the personal piano player for Thomas Edison from 1920 until 1924, owned the Ernest Stevens Studio, Montclair, 50 years.

Born in Elizabeth, he moved to Montclair 17 years ago.

Surviving are three daughters, Mrs. Marjorie Pomeroy, Mrs. Eleanor Perry and Miss Shirley Stevens, and four grandchildren.

(article furnished by Leah S. Burt, Edison National Historic Site)

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